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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. HAYES).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 8, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAHANA HAYES to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 10, 2022, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LOW COLLEGE ENROLLMENT IS NOT A CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, college enrollment decreased this year by a million students. Although many claim dropping enrollment is a crisis, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

This is an opportunity to see that Americans are making more decisions that are best for them. This is an opportunity for Americans to see that

college is not the only pathway to a successful career. This is an opportunity for institutions of higher education to rethink how best to serve students.

As the Republican leader of the Education and Labor Committee and a former educator, I know the importance of giving every American the opportunity to climb the economic ladder through pursuit of postsecondary education.

Yet, the college-for-all mentality has forced many Americans to obtain expensive degrees which may not prepare them for a satisfying career when they could have thrived on an alternative career path. It also allowed institutions to maintain the status quo of high prices and often questionable value.

College is not the only pathway to a fulfilling career. Falling college enrollment could demonstrate that more Americans are weighing the cost of college and deciding it just might not be worth it.

A study by the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity found that the return on investment for obtaining a bachelor's degree varies significantly. The report found that 37 percent of the programs have negative returns on investment, meaning that students will be financially worse off for having participated in those programs.

Students can benefit from college only if they complete their degree. Historically, about 900,000 students leave college without finishing each year, according to Michael Petrilli, president of Fordham Institute. Petrilli surmises that individuals not registering for college could be some of the same students who would have dropped out anyway.

The roughly 40 percent of students who leave college without a degree are often left with a mountain of student debt and no wage increase to help pay

it off. For these students it may have been a better option to enter the workforce, pursue a skilled profession, or put off college until the time was right rather than conforming to societal norms.

The fact that college enrollment is down signals that more Americans are doing just that—that is, making decisions that are better for their lives and families. As more young people come to realize that college is not always a golden ticket, they are embracing alternative career paths.

For example, more Americans are participating in apprenticeship programs or obtaining an associate degree in a high-skilled trade like welding technology or respiratory therapy.

We should celebrate our country's diverse workforce, not belittle it. Looking down on careers in critical industries, especially during a historic labor shortage, is shortsighted. We should encourage more Americans to obtain the skills needed for these in-demand jobs.

College is not the only way for Americans to move up economically. Many careers, particularly those in high-skilled trades, can lead to high and stable incomes. Most importantly, declining enrollments may be the wake-up call colleges and universities needed to finally convince them that they must change to meet the demands of students, families, and our workforce.

The cost of attending college has exploded while student outcomes have remained stagnant. Why would we expect any different when the Federal Government, using taxpayer dollars, is willing to write universities a blank check without requiring any accountability to students and taxpayers?

It is time for these institutions to get serious about providing an affordable education that will prepare students for the workforce. The drop in college enrollment shows that America is ready to change its attitude on "college-for-all" and accept that there are

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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